

Seattle City Council

Neighborhoods, Arts, & Civil Rights Committee Meeting

Friday, 2 PM, September 12, 2003

Words' Worth

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Christopher J. Jarmick**

Today's Words' Worth poet is **Christopher J. Jarmick**

Christopher J. Jarmick, is the author of the critically acclaimed suspense thriller *THE GLASS COCOON* (with Serena F. Holder) and his narrative prose poetry series *THE RED HOUSE TAVERN TALES* is being published over the next year serial style in *BRUTARIAN Magazine* out of Washington D.C. His credits as a television producer include *Hard Copy*, *Entertainment Tonight* and several PBS documentaries. He is the President of PEN-WASHINGTON, the local chapter of the international writing organization started by D.H. Lawrence, H.G. Wells and Joseph Conrad.

GOD TOLD ME TO

By Christopher J. Jarmick

"Even if you believe in no God . . . pray."

Two years ago
the image of the twin towers
crumbling, falling, disintegrating
as if in a Michael Bay/ James Cameron film
was implanted forever
into our consciousness.
We were stunned by
those images:
the screams, the dust
the sirens, the loss.

The taking of so many lives,
beyond what we imagined,
even in our most bloodthirsty moment
of bloodlust anger and revenge.

We are feral;
Lost.
I wonder what hell hath
the retribution wrought.

How many undeserved and innocent are dead.
How many have died for politics, for greed,
in the name of security
in the name of the America
we still try to be proud of.
What if all are victims
of power gone mad?

The loss
of common sense.
Our economy crumbles
as we crumble another's.
The half-truths, the lies,
the votes that didn't matter,
the misjudgments,
the cover-ups, the sacrifices,
the screams, the dust,
the sirens, the loss.

Two years.
I've seen the images;
The burning of Atlanta;
The Odessa steps;
The monkeys tossing the bone
into the air, becoming the
2001 space station;
the blowing up of the bridge
on the River Kwai;
The Twin Towers hit by an
Airplane, the fire ball, and
later the collapse.
Crumbling like a
giant Gulliver on a city street
run out of life.

This wasn't about a cycle
of life and death.
This wasn't nature;
This was obscenity;
This was anger and hate;
Misdirected, cruel, blind.

A political statement
at a nation full of people
who mostly aren't counted,
held accountable
for controlling the balance
of power and wealth thousands of miles and many lands removed.

We were stunned by
those images.
the screams, the dust
the sirens, the loss.

The inability of
a free nation's people
to speak loud enough
and be heard.
The tragic echo
of brutal, total hate.
Fear is what we insist
on sharing;
One fear against another.

Sometimes I almost forget
how the glass, and steel
dust and flesh
crashed down all over me.
Changed so much.
We isolated Oklahoma,
We isolate truth, blame
and instantly we pretend
it happened differently
for different reasons
so we can stop crying in public
and move away from being
so numb and cold
and lost.

We'll listen and believe
almost anything
to put it behind us.
Anger is nothing to be
ashamed of.
We can punish,
We can control
We can win the game
Even without the rule books.

*We must not spare
the rod now.*

Two years.
Lost.

We were stunned by
those images.
the screams, the dust
the sirens, the loss

Travelling down a path
in the dark
The only light
a tv screen's glow
It flickers; not natural light.
But we move down a path;
a conveyer belt
in a slaughter house.
I may not be weighted down,
but eventually I will
get too tired to resist.

Even if you believe in no God
Pray.

-- *END* --

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